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ORIGIN, PERPETUITY AND USE OF
THE SABBATH.

A Sermon,

BY REV. N. GUNNISON.

Delivered in the Universalist Church, in Halifax, December 9, 1860.

Mark II. 27.

The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath.

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Sermon.

"The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath."
MARK II. 27.

It seems, from recent demonstrations in theological circles in this city, that the question touching the origin, perpetuity, and use of the Sabbath is not yet settled; and, judging from the arguments put forth in recent lectures and discourses, we may conclude, I think, that the subject will not settle down upon an unquestionable finality until reason and revelation, philosophy and Scripture philology, shall be seen to harmonize in their teachings respecting God and His creatures—the laws of His kingdom and the highest interests of man, His noblest work.

While there remain in the Christian Church fundamental errors in reference to the relations God sustains to His creatures—while he is viewed as an arbitrary sovereign and lawgiver, and man as a mere subject, whose duty it is outwardly to obey, there will be diversities of opinion in regard to laws and revelations, and the law of the Sabbath will remain an open question.

When Christians shall learn the lessons contained in my text, "that the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath," then will they know that "God is our Lawgiver, and He will save us." That is, that His laws originated in our wants, and are the means of our salvation, or, in other words, our development, peace and happiness. Then will the Sabbath cease to be considered an arbitrary law, and obeyed by fear and constraint—and then discussion will cease, for obedience will flow naturally, as the love of the mother for her first born.

Truth is what we want, for this alone will make us free. Truth in reference to the Sabbath is what, I presume, every person who attended the recent discussions has been seeking for. Truth will do us good. Error and superstition can never benefit any one. What is truth in reference to the Sabbath? This is the question you want answered. Perhaps you think it has been answered; and yet how many retired from that great audience the other evening of the same opinion as when they entered the hall—and how those opinions chafed and clashed against each other! The question is not yet settled, and I am not so vain as to presume that it will be to-night in all your minds.

I have listened to all that has been said in the lectures and discussions, and read with the Bible open before me all that has appeared in the papers touching this matter, and I must, in all good conscience, say that I have seen no occasion to correct my theology and philosophy upon this point from any new light shed upon the subject from the arguments presented on either side. Of the texts quoted, and arguments based upon them, I took notes, and (with these before me) have re-examined the whole subject, and stand now just where I did before the theological waters were troubled.

I propose, this evening, to present before you, not a sectarian, but a Scriptural view of the Sabbath, believing that you are capable of seeing and appreciating the truth, when clearly presented to your minds.

Let it be understood, then, that the observance of the "first day of the week" as a season of religious worship and instruction does not, in the least, depend upon our conceptions of Patriarchal institutions or Jewish laws, and then we can approach the investigation of the origin and perpetuity of the Sabbath without fear of disturbing the present order of worship, which we all so highly esteem. Let it also be borne in mind that no class of people prize the "first day of the week" as "the pearl of days," on account of its privileges and blessings, higher than those who hold that it is not a Sabbath, and has no immediate authority from any revealed law. With these considerations impressed upon our minds, let us open the Bible, and not be afraid to follow where it shall lead.

What is the first lesson we find upon the origin of a Sabbath?

In the account of the creation, God is said to have labored six days, and on the seventh rested from his work, and blessed this seventh day, and sanctified it. Why? "Because that in it He had rested from all His work which God created and made." This is the only reason given. The record does not say that "He rested in the day, and blessed and sanctified it," that He might set an example to Adam and Eve and their posterity to keep every seventh day as a day of rest. But He "blessed and sanctified it" because He rested from His work of creation, having finished it.

Then, again, it must be borne in mind that had He intended to then establish a seventh day Sabbath as a law of Adam and his posterity, it is somewhat remarkable that we have no indications of such observance for more than two thousand five hundred years afterwards! Of a Patriarchal Sabbath we have

no traces. All is conjecture here ; not a foot-print of such an institution has been found by all the patient explorers of the primitive ages ! The Patriarchs might have had their Sabbath of rest, and they might not have had it. We know not, for here the witness is dumb !

The first mention made of a Sabbath, as an institution for man, we find in the xivth. chap. of Exodus, about two thousand six hundred years after the creation of man, and during the sojourn of the Israelites in the wilderness. The manner in which it was introduced is singular and imposing. The people complained to Moses that they had no means of subsistence, which complaint was laid before the Lord, and answered by a miraculous display of power. He rained manna from Heaven upon them six days, and a double portion on the sixth. Moses said to them, " This is that which the Lord hath said, to-morrow is the rest of the holy Sabbath unto the Lord ; bake that ye will bake to-day, and that which remaineth over lay up for you to be kept until the morning."

This, so far as we have any record, was the first actual institution of the Sabbath. For the first time it was then made known to God's chosen people. After this, it was established in the Law with great solemnity, and became a part of that Constitution by which the Jewish Commonwealth was to be governed during its whole existence.

Such was the origin of the Sabbath as an institution. It was given to the Jews soon after the commencement of their forty year's pilgrimage in the wilderness. It was given to them, and designed as a part of that system of laws and precepts and commandments by which they were to be governed in all their generations. It was to be observed by them for a perpetual covenant, and to be regarded as a sign between them and their God. So far this institution concerned the Jews, and only them. As a part of that Constitution, it was to live with it and die with it. And in the language of Fox, " As nothing of Judaism remains but the devotion and morality which were embodied in it, which in their nature are immortal, and which remain, and are obligatory, not because they were incorporated in Judaism, but because they are devotion and morality—the end of man's being ; the perfection of his nature, the essence of his happiness,—so with the institution of the Sabbath as a part of the Jewish ritual."

The Jewish Sabbath, then, passed away when the Mosaic dispensation, of which it was a part, ceased ; and nothing now remains of it but the devotion and morality embodied in it—

nothing but the original necessity of one day in seven as a day of rest and religious improvement. The command was not to observe one day in seven, but the *seventh* day. Now, if this command be still in force, it is the seventh day that must be kept, else the law is broken. We break it as much by keeping the "first day," as though we kept no day at all. As Christians, we have no more to do with the Jewish Sabbath than we have with their Sabbatical Year, or their Feast of Tabernacles, or their Circumcision. And it is very manifest that the Apostles so considered it.

But we are met with the argument that "the law of the Sabbath remains binding on Christians—the time only is changed—the first day of the week is substituted for the seventh—that Christ, being Lord of the Sabbath Day, had the power and the right so to do." We doubt not his power nor his right, but did he do it? This is the question.

Now do those who take this position consider the fearful consequences of their argument? If, as they say, the Sunday be the Sabbath of the law, then it follows that it can be observed only in the way prescribed for that day, for the change in time does not change the thing itself. Pause, now, and consider where we all stand by this argument. We are all a brotherhood of Sabbath-breakers together, and there is no mercy for us. No work—not even a fire kindled by man, maid or servant on that day; and death was the penalty for a breach of this law! But where is the family that keeps this law? Do any of you who contend that the law remains—the time only being changed—impose absolute rest upon your servants and beasts, and refuse to gather fuel and kindle a fire on Sunday? Are you willing that I should call up your servants to testify in this matter? You know what their testimony will be. It is the pack day of nine-tenths of the servants of this city. And with this testimony against you, will you persist in saying that Sunday is the Sabbath of the law, and that you obey it?

Out of your own mouths are you condemned. "You weekly send up the smoke of your transgressions in the face of heaven and earth, as if to display your contempt of the law you profess to own." Such is the condemnation in which the most rigid Sabbatarians at the present day involve themselves by maintaining that "the first day of the week" is the Sabbath of the Jewish law.

Now let us open the New Testament, and see what we can find about this change of days, so much spoken about of late. Do you find any intimation of such a change? Have you found

any? You have doubtless searched your Bibles some of late upon this point, and what have you found? I have searched diligently, and have found no intimation of such a change. But I have found that although the "first day of the week" is mentioned frequently in the New Testament, yet it is never called "the Sabbath." On the contrary, this term Sabbath, whenever it occurs in reference to any particular day, is invariably the seventh. Thus we read in Mat. xxviii. 1, "In the end of the Sabbath, as it began to dawn towards the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre of Christ." And long years afterwards, while the Apostles were out on their missionary tours, we find them in the Synagogues "on the Sabbath day," addressing the people assembled there.—Acts xii. 14; xvii. 1; xviii. 4. Peter also, Acts xv. 21, reminded the Council of Apostles and Elders at Jerusalem "that Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the Synagogue every Sabbath day." You will find, upon examination, that the phrase "Sabbath day" is used throughout the New Testament in direct reference to the Jewish Sabbath, and never in reference to "the first day of the week."

Once more. You will not find, upon examination, that there is recorded a command, or recommendation for keeping Sunday instead of the seventh day. Neither the Jewish nor Gentile converts were ever exhorted to observe it as such. Nor can we conceive it possible that such a change should have taken place and no traces of the change be found in the record, either of the precept by which it was effected, or the command by which it was enforced.

The Apostles evidently understood that the Sabbath, instead of being transferred to another day, was abolished with the rest of the Mosaic institutions.

A dispute arose in the Church at Antioch with regard to the continuance of the law of Moses. The Apostles called a Council to consider the subject (Acts xv. 23-29), and gave its decision in the following letter:—"To the brethren which are of the Gentiles in Antioch, &c., Forasmuch as we have heard that certain who went out from us have troubled you with words subverting your souls, saying ye must be circumcised and keep the law, to whom we gave no such commandment, it seemed good to us, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men to you—men who have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. We have sent, therefore, Judas and Silas, who shall tell you the same thing by mouth. For it seemed good to the

Holy Ghost and to us, to lay no greater burden than these necessary things, that ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication. From which, if ye keep yourselves, you do well. Fare ye well."

Now, had the Sabbath still been obligatory, it certainly would not have been overlooked in this letter to the Gentile Christians, for they kept not only the Jewish Sabbath, but also the first day of the week.*

If one day had been put in the place of the other, why did they keep both?

Again, Paul to the Romans, xiv. 4-6, is to the same point:—"Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? To his own master he standeth or falleth—yea, he shall be holden up, for God shall make him stand. One man esteemeth one day above another—another man esteemeth every day. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. He that regardeth the day regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it."

No sophistry nor special pleading can make it appear that the Apostle did not here refer to the Jewish Sabbath. And that he meant that the observance of it was, like circumcision, in itself indifferent, is certain from what he says to the Colossians, chap. ii. 16-17: "Let no man, therefore, judge you in meat or in drink, or in respect to a holy or festival day, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath days, which are a shadow of things to come, but the body is of Christ."†

Now we come to the practice of the Apostles and primitive Christians. We have their example for keeping the "first day of the week," but not as the Sabbath, as I have already shown. Let us see what their practice was, and why.

The following are all the notices we find:—St. Luke, Acts xx. 7, says that Paul and his brethren came to Troas, and abode there seven days. "And upon the first day of the week, when

* "Whilst the Christians of Palestine who kept the whole of the Jewish law, celebrated, of course, all of the Jewish festivals, the Heathen converts observed only the Sabbath, and, in remembrance of the closing scenes of our Saviour's life, the Passover, though without the Jewish superstitions; besides these they kept the Sunday as the day of our Saviour's resurrection."—*Gieseier's Text-book of Ecclesiastical History*, p. 59.

† In the phrase "Sabbath days," the word *days* is supplied by the translators. The Jewish feasts or festivals were three—neither of them is ever called a Sabbath. The first, or Feast of the Passover, was celebrated for seven days, from the 15th to the 21st of April, in commemoration of an event in their history. The second, or Pentecost, was Feast of Harvest. The third, or Tabernacles, was a solemn thanksgiving for all the bounties of the year, and a memorial of the goodness of God to them when they dwelt in tents in the wilderness. These festivals were always celebrated at Jerusalem, and nowhere else.—*Marsh's Church History*, p. 60.

the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached to them, ready to depart on the morrow, and continued his speech until midnight." This was A. D. 60. Again, Paul writing to the Corinthians about A. D. 56 (1st Corinthians xvi. 2) concerning the collection for the saints, says, "Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come."

There is one more passage which, no doubt, refers to the same day—"the first day of the week"—Rev. i, 10, "I was in the spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a great voice of a trumpet," &c., bidding him to write to the seven churches of Asia. This, we are prepared to show, was written before the year 60. This passage throws no light upon the practice of the primitive Christians with regard to their observance of Sunday. It merely shows that they sometimes distinguished it, not by the appellation of "the Sabbath," but of the "Lord's day," undoubtedly in honor of their Lord's resurrection. Such is the sum total and detail of what we can collect concerning the practice of the Apostles and the primitive Christians, from the New Testament. Whether they devoted the whole day to rest from labor, and to worship and religious improvement, we are not informed. The hour of their assembling is also left to inference alone. No definite statement is given by precept or recorded example.

Now, we will shut up the New Testament, and open the history of the Church from the time when the New Testament leaves it down to the year 150, the period immediately following the Apostolic period.

The earliest account we have is that given by Pliny in A. D. 102, and relates to the customs of the Christians previous to that time. Pliny was Governor of Bithynia, a Roman Province. A number of persons were brought before him under the charge of being Christians. Pliny wrote to Trojan, the Emperor, for instructions, laying before him a full statement of the case. "Some," he says, "when arraigned, confessed themselves Christians, and were immediately punished. The rest owned that they had been Christians, but had renounced that error." Pliny then gave an account of the Christians, as he received it from those apostates.

"They affirmed the whole of their guilt was, that they were accustomed to meet on a certain day, before it was light, and to repeat, by turns among themselves, a hymn to Christ, as to a God; to bind themselves by an oath, not for any purpose of wickedness, but never to commit theft, robbery, or adultery—

never to violate a promise, &c., all of which being concluded, it was their custom to separate, and then to assemble again in order to partake in company of a humble meal."

Here we are informed that they met on a "certain day," and before sunrise. No doubt this day was Sunday, and that they met in honor of Christ's resurrection; and very early in the morning—at the hour in which that event took place—went through with their ritual, separated, and then reassembled to partake of a social meal, answering to the breaking of bread in the New Testament.

The next mention of the same period of the Church we find in a passage from the Epistle of Ignatius, Bishop of the Church of Antioch, who wrote about A. D. 107. Having cautioned his brethren against continuing "to live according to the Jewish laws," he proposed for their imitation the example of those who, "though brought up in those ancient laws, came nevertheless to the newness of hope, no longer observing the Sabbath, but living according to the Lord's resurrection." That is, as I understand it, "assemble on the day of the Lord's resurrection, to commemorate that event and increase your hope, and not as the Jews did on their Sabbath, in obedience to a command contained in their Constitution, now obsolete."

One more testimony I will present, which throws much light upon the subject. Justin Martyr, a Christian Father, A. D. 150, addressed a labored apology for his religion to the Roman Emperor. He described the customs of the Christians, and especially their observance of Sunday. Thus he writes:—"On what is called the day of the Sun all who live either in cities or in the country, assemble in one place, and the memoirs of the Apostles, and writings of the Prophets, are read as time permits."

After giving a full description of their meeting, he proceeds to state the reasons for so doing. "On the day of the Sun we all assemble together, *because* it is the first day on which God brought the world forth from darkness and chaos, and *because* that Jesus Christ our Saviour on that day rose from the dead."

These are the grounds on which, it appears, the early Christians placed the observance of Sunday. "They did not consider it as having any connection with the Sabbath, or as deriving any sacredness or sanction from the injunction laid upon the Jews to hallow that day."

I might pursue this subject farther, and introduce testimony of a later date to the same point. But time will not permit. I proceed, therefore, to state the conclusion of the whole matter,

which is this: "The Apostles and primitive Christians understood the divine institution of the Sabbath expired with the rest of the Mosaic Constitution, and that, without any express ordinance, it grew into a custom with them, in appointing a day for their religious meetings, to choose Sunday, from respect to Christ's resurrection. And this day has been observed in commemoration of that event down to the present time, and is to day a testimony of the truth of the record of Christianity, which scepticism and criticism cannot assail. This, and the Lord's Supper, stand out clear and distinct, as the perpetual monuments of the truth of the evangelical record !

But the Sabbath of the law is not this "first day of the week" of Christians. "That," says Calvin, in Book ii., chap. sec. 32 of his Institutes, "is abrogated." So say Luther, 8, Melancthon, and other bright luminaries of the Reformation. So say Neander, the theologians of Germany, and the whole body of practical Christians called Quakers; and so said the Christian Church up to the time of the Puritans! They re-enacted the Jewish Sabbath with penalties, and made it a day of constraint and burdens! This is history, and cannot be kept hid.

The day—the Lord's day—was abused in England. It was a day of riot, drunkenness, and debauchery—the worst, instead of the best day of the week. This is why the English branch of the Calvinists (the Puritans) differed so much from the Genevan branch. They were led by a strong reaction against the Catholic Church, under which Sunday was so observed, to attempt a revival of the Sabbath with much of its Jewish strictness. And hence the Connecticut Blue Laws, which were but a re-enactment of the Jewish code. I think the Puritans erred in the right direction. I would rather have a Jewish Sabbath than a Lord's day such as existed in England at the time to which I refer.*

I have thus far kept close to the letter of the Bible, and consulted history to show how the letter has been interpreted by Apostles, primitive Christians, and the Church in different ages.

*In 1585 a bill passed Parliament re-enacting the Sabbath, which was rejected by the Queen, and exclaimed against as a restraint upon Christian liberty by many of her favorite clergy. James VI., the successor of Elizabeth, manifested his opposition to the Puritans who had procured the passage of this enactment by publishing a book of sports, drawn up by Bishop Moreton, recommending dancing, archery, leaping, vaulting, &c. But Papist and Puritan was to have no benefit of these games.—*Marsh's Church History.*

In the 16th century the Puritans came to America; and in the Colonial laws of that period you will find, upon examination, the substance of the Jewish code in reference to the Sabbath, repeated. Macaulay, therefore, is right when he says the Puritans re-enacted the Jewish laws of the Sabbath, and contrary to the advice of Calvin and Luther.

I will now invite your attention to a more general and spiritual view of the subject.

There is a foundation for a Sabbath—that is, for a day of rest from physical labor, and for the exercise of the religious nature. This foundation we find not in the Decalogue, but *in man*. It is recognized and incorporated in the Jewish Constitution, but it existed in man long before the law thundered from Mount Sinai! Hence, Christ objected to that Sabbath which regarded man as made for it, not that which was made for man! Its authority, therefore, was in the substantial uses which it subserved, not in an external command. Christ meant that out of the wants of man came the idea of a day of rest and spiritual improvement. He spurned the idea of an arbitrary Sabbath, which was the means of oppression—which the laborer should find more tedious than his labor, and which the youth should hate! *

Now, principles—or, if you prefer, I will say, moral laws—are eternal, and do not depend upon commands or enactments, while Constitutions are temporary and changing. The law of a day of rest from labor, and activity in worship, is an eternal law inhering in man, and is just as divine as his nature is divine, and will exist as long as the want exists out of which, or rather, in which the law originated.

The Jewish Constitution, in which this eternal principle is recognized in a positive command, and enforced by an outward penalty, was temporary, and when it had accomplished its mission, it passed away as the constitution of a nation's government; but the eternal principles of that Constitution remain unchanged, because man remains the same. This old covenant was outward

* How was it with the Puritanical Sabbath of our ancestors? Was it not a day of penance and burdens—when men, women and children were not allowed to breathe nature in her smiles, and in the carol of her birds; and, during long winter days, were obliged to sit in the old Church, without stove or fire, and listen to solemn meditations upon damnation and the dead? No wonder that their thoughts "on awful subjects rolled." The austerities of the day destroyed their feelings of gratitude and devotion. The music in their souls was turned into complainings,—and hence no harp nor organ was allowed in their churches, and their hymns and sacred songs were sung as ~~un-~~ dirges. Were not these Sabbaths to be dreaded, and did not children hate them? I can remember when the first fire was kindled in the old Church of my childhood, and some of the people were greatly troubled lest the comfort it afforded should be charged to their account in eternity. And, when the violin was added to the choir, the Deacon rushed out of the Church in a fright, saying as he went, "If God is to be praised on the Devil's fiddle, it is time for me to leave the Church!" The severities of the day had paralyzed all the joyous impulses of the heart. I speak from the record of my own experience when I say that, in these Puritanical days, there were two things that children dreaded more than anything else—the minister and the Sabbath. Christ meant that such a Sabbath he would spare—for such a Sabbath was not made for man, but man for it. On such a Sabbath invalids suffer, and worshippers sicken most of all. I think in my heart that Jesus would not call that a Sabbath made for man which rolled like a Juggernaut car over the hearts of men.

in all its laws and penalties. It took cognizance only of the overt act. It was obeyed when the hands and the body committed no violation. The law, "Thou shalt not kill," was kept when no murder was perpetrated. So the Sabbath law was kept when no fire was kindled, and no sticks gathered, and no journey performed. But, under the new Constitution—the Christian—these same eternal principles are carried from the mere outward to the inward. To kill then, meant to murder; now, the same principle means to be angry with a fellow-man. To steal, meant to take and appropriate to your own use the property of another; now, it means to covet. To keep the Sabbath then, meant an absolute rest of the body, and an outward offering of sacrifice—such as burning incense, bleeding a bullock, or burning a heifer. Under the New Covenant this same eternal principle is active, and answered in heart-offerings of praise, and sacrifices of the spirit. Then, all was outward—now, all is inward. Then, the question was, "What have you done?" Now it is, "With what *intent* did you do it?" Here is the difference between the Old Constitution, which is abolished, and the New, which is now in force! The penalty then, for violated law, was upon the body; now, it is upon the heart—the affections!

You who wish to enforce the old law by enactments and penalties are yet in Moses' seat. You have not got so far even as to John's dispensation, and I fear will never reach Christ's, which is an inward rule, and attended with inward rewards and penalties!

Now, if I have made myself understood, you can see, every one of you, how you must keep "the first day of the week," as Christians. As Jews, you must kindle no fire in your habitations; but, as Christians, you must "worship God in spirit, and in truth." The observance of the day must be the inward service of the heart—not a mere outward compliance with arbitrary law. This inward principle will work itself out in forms and seasons. But the acceptable rest and worship are not in the forms and seasons; yet the forms and seasons have a reflex influence on the spirit, and promote its acceptable offerings.

The eternal law of the Sabbath, written upon every part of the threefold nature of man, finds expression in the commemorative assembling on the day of Christ's resurrection; and thus the law of rest from toil, the law of worship, and the law which prompts to the recalling of great and glorious events, are all outwardly expressed, as the form of the Spirit in what we call the Christian Sabbath.

Now, I will speak of the benefits of this day, as an outward form, or Christian institution. The origin of the institution

think I have clearly defined. If I have not made this plain to your minds, it is because I have attempted to press into a single discourse a great subject, which requires a long series of lectures, and not because the subject is in itself dark and intricate. I must leave its origin here, and speak of its utility. I regard it as a divine institution, as I do all forms and seasons which have grown out of the wants of man.

And it seems to me that a more beneficent institution could not exist. Man's well-being—his highest interests and happiness demand it. Therefore he has it. It was made for him—morally, intellectually, and physically.

Wisely has it been said, "It is a happy immunity for all industrious classes—the master's best solace, the workman's best protection." "The Sabbath was made for man,"—and so was the Church, the family, the school, and the State. They are all divine. The Sabbath, if devoted to the great purpose for which it was given, is directly calculated to enhance his happiness in every relation of life. It was given that he might not wholly "sink into an unbroken dream of this world,"—that he might not wear himself out in chasing phantoms, and hoarding up perishable riches. Blot it out, and not five generations would pass before man would return to his dumb idols, it not sink into beastly savagism! It was given that he might be reminded of the great truth that God is above him, and around him, and beneath him, and that he might seek an acquaintance with Him, and be at peace!

"The Sabbath was made for man," and should be hailed by him, as often as its morning light dawns upon him, as a day of repose from the toils, and cares, and perplexities, and sorrows of life, that he may turn his thoughts to the contemplation of subjects which relate to him as a being that partakes of immortality, and destined to become an inhabitant of a higher and holier sphere. It, therefore, becomes to him, if observed from the heart, (and it can be truly observed only from the heart,) a season of rest, and yet of labor—but it is the labor of mind and spirit, and hence that labor "which brings the sweetest repose—the rest of the pure in heart—the rest of the people of God—the rest which the weary and heavy laden spirit seeks." It is the labor of the spirit for divine knowledge, for purity of motive, for faith and hope, and it brings them in the most blissful repose! O, how sweet the rest this ever-varying activity brings to the soul, weary and worn down by sin—by its slavery and its sorrow! While ignorant of God, we have him not. The Sabbath invites us to the study of his character, and, therefore, to the

attainment of that knowledge which will lead us to love Him, and develope in His love, in filial obedience to all His just and holy laws! It invites us to a consideration of the beautiful illustrations contained in the teachings of Jesus and his Apostles—of the doctrine of a common brotherhood, that we may love one another, and find that pure enjoyment which the faithful discharge of those kindly offices of love cannot fail to impart. In one word—it invites us to the study and reception of the Gospel, with all its sublime teachings—concerning God, His character and perfections, His will and purpose;—concerning Christ, the nature and objects of his mission, and the certainty of its fulfilment;—concerning man, his nature, duties and obligations, the relation he sustains to God, and his “sure and certain” destiny in glory!

And how beautiful the reflection that the day set apart by the wants of the body and spirit, and consecrated, by the example of Christ and Apostles, to such a high and beneficent purpose, should be the day on which the Saviour rose from the dead! It seems peculiarly appropriate, that the day of cessation from bodily labor, which the physical system requires, and the day of instruction and worship, which the mind and heart demand, should be the same day. But, best of all is it, that that day should be the one on which the King of Kings came forth from the sepulchre—the crowned conqueror of death and hell! Best of all is it, that that day should be the day which gave to the world its Redeemer, bidding it rejoice in the glorious hope of a resurrection to an immortal life! Best of all is it, that that day should be the day on which the darkness, and the gloom which hung over the future, were swept away, bidding the children of men look into the holy of holies! Best of all is it, that that day should be the day which invited the followers of the crucified, but risen Christ to assemble to commemorate his resurrection to life!

With a joy, such as nothing else could have inspired, they assembled on that day, and, as they mused upon the great event, which seemed almost too good to be true, their thoughts were turned to the contemplation of God, who sent him to teach and live, as never man had taught and lived, and their whole being was thrilled with sensations of joy, before unfelt and unknown! They meditated upon the event of his resurrection, which brought back their fond hopes and bright anticipations, until their hearts overflowed with gratitude. “Then, they bowed the knee, and breathed the prayer of faith,

“and then the hymn,
Sincere in its low melody, went up
To worship God.”

And then his words dropped as the rain, and his speech distilled as the dew, and were as the small rain upon the tender plant. They listened, believed, and became strong in virtue, rich in faith, and joyful in hope! And the same is now experienced by every true believer. Yes, there is a beautiful propriety in making the Sabbath of Christians the resurrection Sabbath. This very fact makes it the first and most excellent of days to the Christian believer! "The light of its morning shines gloriously upon him; and he is in the spirit of the Lord, and feels as if earth were a Paradise, and trodden by angels!" And he hears a voice within him, saying, "Go up to the house of God, and, as thou goest, say to all around thee, come and let us go up to the temple of praise, and worship God in the beauty of holiness," that we may be better prepared to go forth into life, when the morrow's sun has risen upon us; and, as we go to tread its busy marts, "deal justly, love mercy, and walk humbly,"—meet its temptations without sin, endure its sorrows without complaining, say to affliction, "Welcome! thy hand is cold and hard, but it is the hand of a friend! Thy voice is stern and harsh, but it bids us go up higher!"

Let it never be said of us, my friends, that we think lightly of this "pearl of days!" Let us realise that it is Christian all through, since it "was made for man." He who wrongs this day by dishonoring it, or by cumbering it with austerities, which make it a burden, wrongs human nature!

Let us ever bear in mind that it rests not upon an arbitrary law, which can be obeyed only by restraints and penalties, which, with moral beings, is no obedience at all,—but that human nature, from base to summit, from muscle to mind, and from sinew to soul, was the Sinai from which that great Jewish Lawgiver, Moses, brought the day of rest! To him, the constitution of man was a table of law written by Jehovah! Those tables are again repeated in every man born into the world! The principles of the Decalogue are written on every new-born heart! Among these, a day of rest is to be revered, not as an arbitrary exaction, but as a natural privilege! And these are the greatest enemies of this day, who would divorce it from the inherent wants of man, and wed it with an arbitrary command, which slaves only obey! Let us, my brethren, not be guilty of perverting our privileges, least of all that one which calls to mind the resurrection of Christ, as our hope and the hope of the world! Amen.